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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 000606

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DEPT FOR SA/FO, SCA/A, S/CT, S/CR, SCA/PAB, EUR/RPM  
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR AID/ANE, AID/DCHA/DG  
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SUBJECT: KARZAI DISCUSSES SECURITY, PAKISTAN WITH CODEL  
DICKS

Classified By: Ambassador Ronald Neumann for Reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

11. (U) On February 21, Codel Dicks discussed security and reconstruction issues with President Karzai. Karzai expressed confidence about GOA and ISAF ability to succeed. Attendees included Representatives Dicks, Kaptur, Frelinghuysen, Rothman, Carney, and Murphy.

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Afghans Confident About Winning the War  
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12. (SBU) Karzai was upbeat, and the tone of meeting was relaxed. Karzai repeated several times that he was much more confident about the current security situation than he was at this time last year, and characterized himself as a "relatively happy man." He emphasized that NATO needs to "complete the win" that is "ours for the taking" this year. Karzai explained that Afghans are at their best when they have a clear vision and purpose to support. He added that this spring they know clearly that the U.S. supports them and will not abandon the fight to eliminate the Taliban. The President commented that during his December trip to Kandahar, locals told him they were upset that there was not more engagement by NATO. "When we want to confront them," he said, "they (the Taliban) are no match for us." Karzai was clear that the spring offensive is coming, but he noted that the population is a lot more confident about getting through it than they were last fall. Karzai expressed strong support for incoming General McNeill, stating that if McNeill says he needs four more battalions, he is right. Pointing to the issue of insurgents in the border region, the President loosely suggested some form of trilateral US-Afghan-Pakistan "treaty" to deal with the problem.

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Narcotics A Concern, Not a Threat  
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13. (SBU) Karzai noted the importance of providing alternative livelihoods (AL) for poppy growers, but said AL must be understood to encompass "raising the quality of life for all," including improved rule of law, infrastructure, and security. Narcotics, he said, is a "concern, not a threat."

He said that while some narcotics money goes to fund terrorism, a lot of it simply goes to finance the narcotraffickers' lifestyles. He concluded that the Afghan National Army is doing well, and the Afghan National Police is just being built, noting that ANP training is three years behind schedule.

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Relations with Musharraf  
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¶4. (C) Karzai said that he had a "direct line" to Musharraf, and noted that he called Musharraf more than vice versa. Karzai emphasized that he makes a point to never go on the personal attack, but rather focuses on the substantive issues. He explained that they engage on subjects, not on personalities. Karzai noted that Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz "shares the same world view as we have here in Afghanistan." Karzai criticized Musharraf's efforts to handle terrorism, pointing out that Musharraf must take more relevant steps. Putting 80,000 troops on the border is not useful if they are not strategically placed. Karzai said wistfully that the GOA and GOP could make a huge impact against terrorism on the border areas, but Musharraf will not take action, and "he won't let us take action (meaning to strike across the border)." He said that for the first time Pakistani tribal chiefs have come to visit him, mixing in with Afghan delegations, to plead for assistance in combating terrorists in their lands. The President sharply criticized the Pakistani mass media for supporting the Taliban. He explained that the former Pakistani Ambassador to Afghanistan was on television just yesterday saying that the Taliban were "fighting a war of liberation." He lamented that the GOP is using radical Islam to achieve their objectives of national

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cohesion and also to project its regional interests outside of his borders. Karzai said that the biggest weapon to counteract this trend is to support secular Pashtuns in Pakistan. Engaging the right people in Pakistan is key.

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Relations with Iran  
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¶5. (C) Karzai said relations with Iran have been virtually "at a standstill" since President Khatami left-- until the past two months. Now, he explained, they are actually going down. Karzai said the GOA has reports of Iranian agents engaging the Taliban and trying to supply them with weapons. The President strongly encouraged the US to talk to Iran about Iraq.

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